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DACCA UNIVERSITY BULLETIN

No. XIII

The  
Construction of Reading Material  
for Teaching a  
Foreign Language

BY

MICHAEL WEST, M.A.

Hon. Reader in Education in the University of Dacca

with a preface by

SIR PHILIP HARTOG, C.I.E., L.D.O.



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1927



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# The Construction of Reading Material for Teaching a Foreign Language

BY

MICHAEL WEST, M.A. (OXON.)

*Hon. Reader in Education, Dacca University.*

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

SIR PHILIP HARTOG, C.I.E., D.C.L.

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## PREFACE

Mr. West has invented a new method of teaching children to read, and to read rapidly, in a foreign language. He has explained the principles of his method in his book on Bilingualism,\* which Sir Michael Sadler has justly characterized as a "book of creative power." In order to make it possible to apply his method to the schools Mr. West has designed a series of Readers, which give evidence of great resource and ingenuity. He has gone further than most inventors, for in the present work he has explained in detail how he has overcome the inevitable difficulties which present themselves in the construction of such Readers. The present book, like Mr. West's larger book, and his Readers, will be full of interest to all teachers of foreign languages who have retained the freshness of mind necessary to enable them to take up new ideas, and to put them into practice.

The subject is one of immense practical importance to India, and to those other countries where the mastery of a second language is of vital interest.

I think that every one acquainted with Indian schoolboys and students must have been struck, as I have been struck, by the very narrow range of their information and ideas compared with the range of youths of the same age and status in other countries. That narrowness is due to no want of intellectual capacity. In Bengal, the Province of India which I know best, I should say that the average of intelligence is very decidedly high. But the average of general information is as decidedly low, at present, and this lack of knowledge gravely retards not only the progress of individuals but the intellectual, industrial and economic progress of the country as a whole. In a University address the Earl of Balfour once said "He has only half learned the art of reading who has not added to it the more refined accomplishments of skipping and skimming." I would go further. The power of rapid reading or "skimming" is indeed something much more than an accomplishment; it is an absolute necessity of everyday

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life for the man of business and affairs, as well as for the scholar. The amount of printed matter presented in the form of newspapers, articles and books, is so immense, that if we have not the power to see at a glance what is of importance and interest to us with a view to reading that carefully, at the moment or at some future time, we can never cope with the demands of a busy life, and we shall be left behind by better trained competitors. From what I saw of certain initial experiments at Dacca and from the perusal of Mr. West's works I am convinced that they will yield to the teachers of India a powerful instrument for the development of their pupils.

But that is not all. I am, and always have been, an advocate of the teaching of the mother-tongue as an instrument of general intellectual development. I am certain from what I have seen and heard that that instrument is very imperfectly used in India at the present moment. Lip-service is often rendered by public speakers and others to the subject ; but enquiries made at various times into the status and intellectual attainments (and, shall I add, pay) of the teachers of the vernacular in the high schools, of the real capacity of the pupils to write clearly and well in the vernacular, of the standard of examinations in the vernacular as compared with that in other subjects, have convinced me that enthusiasm for the teaching of the mother-tongue has not yet translated itself effectively into action. All this should be altered ; and Mr. West's methods ought to assist in an indirect but important way in the change. The Calcutta University Commission pointed out the excessive amount of time devoted to the study of English in the high schools in relation to the results attained. Mr. West's methods might very materially help to diminish the amount of time required for the teaching of English and to increase the amount available for the teaching of the mother-tongue, and other subjects.

I may be sanguine, but I believe that if these new methods are applied, and applied intelligently, they will effect nothing less than a revolution in Indian education.

P. J. HARTOG.

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# **The Construction of Reading Material**

**for Teaching a Foreign Language.**

## **1. The Problem of Bilingualism.**

We have discussed elsewhere<sup>1</sup> the linguistic needs of those bilingual peoples whose mother-tongue is one of the minor languages. We have endeavoured to show that the excessive time and energy devoted among such peoples to the study of English (or some other major language) leads to neglect of the mother-tongue ; that the mother-tongue is irreplaceable in respect of the spiritual things of life, and that its neglect must have most serious consequence on the emotional development of a people. We have analysed the need felt by these peoples for a major language, and have found that their essential need is to be able to read the language as a source of knowledge. Such passive use of a language is far easier to attain than an active use ; it is also the natural and most effective preparation for subsequent study of the active use. On these grounds we have advocated that the teaching of Reading should be emphasised in the first stage of teaching a major foreign language in schools.

We have further shown, by the results of various experiments, that, given reading material constructed according to certain principles, Reading Ability can actually be acquired as the initial stage in the study of a foreign language without preliminary work in speech or writing, and that the progress of the class is, under these conditions, at about three times the normal rate.

## **2. The Significance of these conclusions.**

Now, it is clear that these arguments, and the results of these experiments, may be of very far-reaching consequence to all peoples whose mother-tongue is one of the minor languages :—and such peoples constitute a very large majority of the non-English-speaking

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<sup>1</sup> *Bilingualism*, (with special reference to Bengal), Govt. of India Occasional Reports, No. 13, 1926.

nations. The application of these principles would involve an extensive change in the teaching of the most important subject in their school-system ; and, if that result, which we have predicted, were actually produced, it would very greatly affect the intellectual life of the people as a whole. It would set free energy for a popular renaissance of the native literature, and give to the mother-tongue an unprecedented importance in their education. At the same time it would bring within the reach of a vastly greater number of children—and adults—than ever before the possibility of direct contact with the literary and scientific riches of the great languages of the world.

We have, in effect, promised that any person of average intelligence may, within two or three years, and at a cost of little effort or discomfort, attain such free intercourse with the mind of a foreign people, as previously a whole school-life usually failed to effect. Either this promise is one of those vague theoretical predictions whose realization is barred by some simple, but insuperable, obstacle, (there are many such in all branches of invention) or else it is a matter of the greatest educational importance to a very large number of peoples.

It is necessary to ascertain whether there is any such obstacle in the way of the realization of this promise.

### **3. The Question of Practicability.**

The question is of the practicability of the method in the ordinary school and for the ordinary schoolmaster. It has been claimed that, given reading material constructed according to certain principles (which are admitted to be somewhat ideal), reading ability in a foreign language can be produced in an abnormally short time. But the experiments, on the results of which this opinion is based, were conducted using material which had been constructed before any experience had been obtained of the many unforeseeable practical difficulties of such a task, before even those ideal principles of textbook construction had been fully or clearly formulated. The gain in rate of progress may be admitted, but only as the result of a laboratory experiment ; for the defects of the reading material used in it were such that the skill of a teacher thoroughly conversant with the details and the theory of the system was (and would be) needed to compensate for them. Nor has any promise been made in the report of these experiments as to the results which might be achieved by other less expert persons. The con-

clusion arrived at in the report was that a new set of reading materials is "desiderated."<sup>1</sup>

On the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of this desideratum must hang any decision as to whether this promise was an impracticable imagination, or a contribution to educational progress.

Thus the discussion comes down to a clear and definite issue—whether or not it is possible to construct reading material which fulfils the requirements of the theory.

#### 4. The Purpose of this book.

In the following pages we shall not describe in detail what has been done,—for that is already available in print<sup>2</sup>; but we shall describe the technical means whereby it has been done, and we shall discuss the reasons for many special points of treatment.

In a period of fifteen months four reading-books in English have been constructed with their accompanying materials, teaching a vocabulary of about 1,000 words. Further books are still being constructed. A series in French is under construction. Applications for permission to construct series in Welsh and Sanscrit have been considered. Suggestions for a series in German, Spanish, Italian and other languages have been received. A series in Bengali was completed and used for teaching Zenana women. The Bengali word-frequency list was at that time incomplete: the reading material is now being reconstructed with the help of the completed list and according to the technique evolved in the course of the construction of the English series.

The chief difficulty in this task has lain in the pioneer-work of finding out *how* to do it. The vast amount of labour spent on the English series has produced relatively so little reading material, because in the earlier stages an effective technique had not been discovered. Before the present procedure was evolved the production of the first draft of a story was a slow and precarious process; there were many set-backs, and many weeks were lost in the detection of errors; whereas it is now possible to produce the reading material with far greater accuracy and at a reasonable, although of course not very rapid, rate.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Bilingualism*, pages 304-5.      <sup>2</sup> *The New Method Readers (New Series) Readers IA, IB, II, III; Companions IA, IB, II, III; Supplementary Readers I, II, III; Teacher's Handbook*, (Longmans, Green & Co.)

<sup>3</sup> With the present technique it is possible to complete about 50 words of material per hour, that is, about one handwritten page in a day.

We have for this reason described our technique in considerable detail in the hope that we may thus help others, who will, we trust, be able to improve upon it in their turn.

## 5. Aims in the Construction of the reading-books.

The purposes aimed at in the construction of these reading-books were as follows :—

(1) To produce English reading-books for foreign children which should conform as closely as possible to the criteria set out in "Bilingualism" (pages 269-274).

(2) To embody in a series of such reading-books the added experience gained in the use of the original series (constructed for use in the three experimental classes).<sup>1</sup>

*and*

(3) To discover to what extent and in what way such reading-books could be further perfected in detail.

When an author saves time by leaving the faults of his book unremedied, the reader loses it by stumbling over its imperfections. In the case of a novel, which takes far longer to write than it does to read, a few days saved by the author may cost the reader at most a few minutes. But in the case of a reading-book, which ordinarily takes far less time to edit than it takes the child to study it, a few minutes saved by the author may cost the child an hour or even a day. (It might be a sound principle—though one not always applicable,—that the author of a school-book should take at least as long to write the book as the child will take to learn it!)

A great part of the loss of time of a child in studying appears to be due to the absence from his textbook of those little refinements of convenience whose elaboration is so conspicuous in more material inventions, — such as a motor-car. Here vast trouble and expense are devoted to eliminating every minor loss of time or comfort of the passenger, as for example in the perfect fitting of a window, the exact curvature of the seat to give just the support needed, the exact placing of the controls for handiness, etc. In a textbook it is otherwise : the questions do not quite fit the text (because the text has not been fitted back on to them <sup>2</sup>), the pictures do not illustrate just the point which needs illustration,<sup>3</sup> the vocabulary is awkward to get at, and does not give just the right meaning.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Bilingualism*, Chapters 9 and 10.

<sup>2</sup> See page 24 below.

<sup>3</sup> See page 7 below.

<sup>4</sup> See pages 11, 25 below.



This may perhaps be due to some fear of "making things too easy." Or perhaps adults demand a higher standard of comfort for themselves than they do for their children.

We propose to attempt to apply to a child's reading-book these adult standards of time-saving and comfort,—to build the book from the point of view of its 'passenger,' so as to foresee and eliminate every needless loss of time or of convenience, to omit nothing which might give a greater return in learning-effect for the same expenditure of energy on the part of the learner, to leave no superfluity which merely adds to cost in time or money.

## 6. Problems of illustration.

The application of these principles is exemplified in the problem of illustration.

Pictures are used in a book for two reasons :—

1. To make the book appear attractive, *and*
2. To assist in the fulfilment of the purpose of the book.

In a school-textbook we are not primarily concerned with the first purpose : we are not here making a book to decorate a drawing-room table, but one which shall, as cheaply, easily, and efficiently as possible, impart certain knowledge or skill. Pictures add greatly to the cost of a book, not merely by their own cost of production, but also by the area of paper which they use. The first element will not greatly affect the price of the book<sup>1</sup>, for the prime cost of the pictures is divided by the number of copies printed, which, in the case of a school-book, is large ; but the cost of paper is multiplied by the number of copies. It was decided therefore that every picture in these reading-books must be able to satisfy the following conditions : —

1. It must not be a mere decoration, but help forward the purpose of the book.
2. It must not be any larger or more complex than the sufficient fulfilment of its purpose demands.

(i) "*Every picture must help forward the purpose of the book.*"

The purpose of a reading-book is to teach a child the art of gathering ideas from printed matter. The only evidence of the effectiveness of reading is the ability of the reader to reproduce, or to answer questions on, the substance of the passage read. Pictures illustrating the substance of a passage in a reading-book tend to

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<sup>1</sup> We here refer, of course, to line-drawings such as are most ordinarily used.

act as a substitute for reading, and thus invalidate this evidence. Such illustrations are therefore not to be used.<sup>1</sup>

It may be asked, 'What, then, is the purpose of such pictures as 'The Bells of London' and 'White with snow' (Book IB, pages 41, 75)? The answer is that church-bells and snow are ideas which are unfamiliar to children in tropical and non-Christian countries, and such probably constitute the majority of our readers. (The picture on page 82 of Book IA is rendered necessary by the absence of the word *Ran*).

Another example of apparently purposeless illustration is the very copious illumination of the Practice Sentences in the early part of Reader IA. The child when he begins the study of a foreign language inevitably does a good deal of reading aloud. In reading aloud there is always a danger of interpreting the printed words into sounds without any thought of their meaning. (In this connexion the unintelligent reading of our second Experimental Class may be recalled).<sup>2</sup> For this reason the child must constantly be reminded at this stage that every sentence has a meaning,—even the disjointed practice-sentences. This is done by illustrating the meaning with a picture at frequent intervals.

It will perhaps appear strange that, in spite of this strict economy of pictures inside the book, there should yet be an elaborate picture-cover outside. A child taking up a story-book written in his mother-tongue looks at the chapter-headings, glances through the book, sees what it is about, and decides whether he wants to read it. But he cannot do this with a book written in a foreign language: hence we have provided a pictorial Table of Contents in order to inform the child of the general substance of the book and to encourage in him a desire to read it. By doing this on the cover we use up a page which would otherwise be wasted. (The child does not, of course, know till afterwards where each of these pictures 'belongs' in the text, so they give no illegitimate help to him.)

(ii) "*The picture must not be larger or more complex than the fulfilment of its purpose demands.*"

It follows from this requirement that the pictures must be made as small as possible. Some experiment was required to attain this object. It was found that if the pictures are reduced by photography there is always some loss of clearness. The only safe and efficient

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<sup>1</sup> Such illustrations have actually been used on two occasions,—but only as the tail-piece of a book, where they do no such harm; and, since it is already a broken page, they waste no paper. <sup>2</sup> *Bilingualism*, page 287: *Learning to read a Foreign Language*, (Longmans, Green & Co.) pages 35-36.

method was found to be to draw the pictures as small as possible and reproduce them of the same size.

It is a principle of the series that every illustratable new word shall be illustrated on its first appearance. This is done, not in order to supply the meaning of the word (for that is done in the Companion), but rather because it is found that the visual image of the picture with the word written on it is of the greatest help to the child in remembering the word. In these pictures it is extremely important that there should be no possibility of mistake nor blurring of the mental image. For example, if, in illustrating the new word To Fly (II-8), the artist were to include the man following as well as the man running away, the child might form a wrong or confused memory of the word as meaning Pursue; if the artist does not include the pursuer, the child may form a wrong memory of the word as meaning To Run. In practice the requirement is extremely difficult to fulfil: it means that many of the pictures have to be drawn, discussed, and redrawn several times.

Another danger of these New Word pictures is that of unduly limiting the idea by the picture. Thus if Cook (IB-15) is illustrated by a picture of a Chef, the child may think that the word means only a man-cook. For this reason the word Water (IA-12) is difficult to illustrate. The only solution is a row of pictures each contributing something to the meaning.

## 7. The Order of the Letters.

The general principle on which the first reader is constructed has been explained: <sup>1</sup> the letters of the alphabet are introduced in the order of their relative commonness in the first two hundred words. In practice it was found that the use of this letter-order gave rise to a deficiency of nouns (presumably because most of the very common words are not nouns). To correct this, the letter-frequency order of the nouns was studied and the letter-order of the book was modified accordingly. The idea subsequently suggested itself that a better order would have been obtained if the frequency count had been weighted by the 'credit-index'<sup>2</sup> of each word in which the letter occurred, thus:—

| Word  | Credit | A   | B   | C | D   | E   | F  | G  | H  | I  | J  | K  | L  | M  | N  | O   | P  | Q  | R   | S | T   | U   | V  | etc. |
|-------|--------|-----|-----|---|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|----|----|-----|---|-----|-----|----|------|
| About | 172    | 172 | 172 |   |     |     |    |    | .. | .. |    |    | .. |    | .. | 172 | .. |    |     |   | 172 | 172 | .. |      |
| After | 158    | 158 |     |   | 158 | 158 | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. | .. |     |    | .. | 158 |   | 158 | ..  | .. |      |

<sup>1</sup> *Bilingualism*, pages 278-283.

<sup>2</sup> See *Bilingualism*, Glossary.

The difference is, however, very slight, affecting only four letters, B. K. L. R.—but these were the letters whose order one felt most need to change.

## 8. Pronunciation Signs.<sup>1</sup>

The child first learning to read his mother-tongue has merely to decipher words, now seen for the first time in print, but previously encountered in speech. A child learning to read a foreign language makes his first acquaintance with the sound and the sight of a new word simultaneously, when he first meets it in the reading-book and the teacher pronounces it for him. The problem is to make this 'bond,' between Perception of the printed word and the Pronunciation and Sound of the word, as correct and secure as possible. Irregular spelling tends to mislead the child into a wrong or blurred memory of the pronunciation.

Irregularly spelt words are of course avoided as far as possible in the early stages ; but it is not possible to avoid them altogether, for many of the commonest words in English are irregular. In any case the child has got, sooner or later, to learn how to deal with irregularities.

A complete system of phonetic printing throughout would include many words in the phonetic type which cause no trouble whatever. Moreover, in regard to the troublesome words, such a system merely postpones the problem.

Some children are much more easily worried by irregularities of spelling than others : often the more intelligent and rather logically-minded child is the worst sufferer. Again, an irregularity which will cause great trouble to one child will pass quite unnoticed by another.

What is needed is some instrument which can be put into the hands of each individual child, to be used by himself, and to be used only when he needs it, which will enable him to deal with those irregular spellings which actually trouble him personally. This must obviously be some system of supplementary signs or accents which may be added to the normal spelling of the word.

Several systems of this kind have been invented.

### (i) *Phonoscript*.<sup>2</sup>

Small flourishes are added to the letter, or the form of the letter is slightly altered ; thus : - - .

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<sup>1</sup> The Pronunciation Signs which I have adopted will be found in the *Companions* : see also pages 4 and 5 of *The Teacher's Handbook*.

<sup>2</sup> Hayes, Alfred E., *The Phonoscript System*, (G.P. Putnam's Sons, Ltd.).

o means o as in Moon

o " .. " .. Come.

But these additions are too minute to be added by a child to ordinary printing; the system does not therefore comply with our requirements.

(ii) *Dr. Craigie's System.*<sup>1</sup>

Each letter or combination of letters is allowed a certain normal sound equivalent; simple diacritical marks are added where the sound is abnormal. Thus:—

S—son hou<sup>u</sup>ses <sup>u</sup>re vi<sup>i</sup>sion

This system has two disadvantages,—

(1) We have shown that it is not necessary or desirable to mark every letter phonetically throughout: but, in this system, if we do not mark a letter, we thereby imply that the letter has a certain 'normal' sound.

(2) Each diacritical mark has a different meaning according to the letter to which it is applied. The child is therefore required to learn as many different uses of the symbols as there are irregular uses of the letters, including, in some cases, as many as four or five representations of the same sound. This number of different uses of the symbols is far in excess of the total number of letters in the standard phonetic alphabet; and these little diacritical marks with their varying meanings are very much more difficult to learn.

(iii) *The System of Prof. J. J. Findlay and W. H. Bruford.*<sup>2</sup>

Diacritical marks are added to the letters, each such mark always representing the same sound. The variety of symbols is greater than in Dr. Craigie's system, but the total amount which has to be memorized is, of course, less; and it is not necessary to mark every letter.

(iv) *The system of H. V. Groves.*<sup>3</sup>

This seems to be of much the same nature as Prof. Findlay's system; but, owing to the cost of the special type required, the Editor of the journal in which it has been described was unable to print a specimen.

The first system tried by the present writer was that of Dr. Craigie, and this was used for some months. Eventually the complication and difficulty of remembering the meaning of the signs, and of their

<sup>1</sup> Craigie, W. A., *The Pronunciation of English* (Clarendon Press, 1921).

<sup>2</sup> Findlay, J. J. & Bruford, W. H., *Sound and Symbol*, 1917.

<sup>3</sup> Groves, H. V., *Phonetics without Symbols*, "Modern Language," February, 1926.

absences, became such that the system was abandoned, and all the material in which it had been used was thrown aside. The writer then consulted Prof. Daniel Jones as to the choice of a simple system in which each mark should indicate one sound only. He suggested a most ingenious system of marks, each mark being reminiscent of the corresponding symbol of the International Phonetic Alphabet, so that the transition from the one to the other would be very easy. Thus the circumflex accent was used for the sound *Λ* (as in *Up*) and a small cross for the sound *æ* (as in *Cat*).

Unfortunately this system could not be used because of an unforeseen objection, which applies also to all the systems described thus far. Any system of this kind, to be really useful, must be capable of becoming popular. Hence it must be possible for any printer to print it, and the printing of it must not add appreciably to the cost of the book in which it is used. The intention in devising the above system was that, in printing, the signs should be added as separate type above the ordinary type. But, when a printer was consulted as to the feasibility of this, he pointed out that it would be difficult for a child, with these small signs set far above the letters, to know to which letter a sign was intended to apply; and he was of opinion that it would be necessary to make a special matrix embodying the letter and the sign. Since each sound in English may be spelt in two or three different ways, it would be necessary to have at least 21 matrices for the vowels alone.

It was necessary therefore to devise a new system which would comply with the following conditions:—

1. The signs must be fairly large, so that the eye may readily associate them with the letter above (or below) to which they refer.
2. The signs must require no special type.
3. The signs must be so simple that the child can learn to form them quite easily; or else they must be something with which he is familiar already.

The suggestion required was found in a book entitled "*Phonetics without Symbols*" by G. C. Bateman.<sup>1</sup> In this book the vowels of French are replaced by numbers from 1 to 16. All children of almost all mother-tongues are acquainted with the Arabic figures. We proposed to substitute the figures instead of substituting them for the letters (as is done by Bateman). One other modification was necessary:—the sign 12 might mean the twelfth sound, or a diphthong of the first and second sounds. We therefore eliminated

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<sup>1</sup> W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd, Cambridge, 1925.

the distinction between **g** and **e** and between **a** and **α**, both of which are too fine to be perceived by the ear of a foreign child, thereby reducing the vowels to nine. Thus all double numbers represent diphthongs. In the case of consonants *v* is used for voicing, *e.g.* Houses : a dot is used, as by Dr. Craigie, for silencing, *e.g.* Caught. Other cases are met by using explanatory letters, *e.g.* Enough, Giant : *z* is used for the sound of *s* as in Measure ; *s* for soft *c*, *e.g.* City ; *§* for *sh*, *e.g.* Sure.

## 9. "New words" and "New Usages."

It will be recollected that in these reading-books there are sixty running words of text for every new word introduced.<sup>1</sup> Now there are certain slight changes of form or of meaning in a word which certainly do not involve the same effort of memory as a new word : *Example*, Boys run : water runs. If each case of this kind were noted as a new word, the books would be expanded to an inordinate length, and the difficulty of passages would vary widely according to the proportion in them of such pseudo 'new words.' If, on the other hand, such words are not noted in some way, they will come upon the children as unexpected and uncomfortable obstacles. The difficulty has been dealt with by bracketing such words : they are thus pointed out to the child (and to the teacher), and their meanings are given in the Companions : but they are not computed in calculating the size of the vocabulary, on which depends the length of the lesson and of the book. Such bracketed 'new words' are called "usages."

There is no difficulty in deciding what should or should not be included as a 'usage' : we have to point out every difficulty which the child is unlikely to be able to guess for himself. If we are in doubt whether the child will, or will not, be able to guess the meaning of a certain modification, it means that the child himself may be in doubt in his guess : hence all doubtful cases must be included.

The distinction which does present difficulty is that between a usage and a new word. Are, for example, *Hang* (suspend) and *Hang* (strangle) two new words, or one new word and a usage ? Certain rules have been framed which need not be detailed here.

## 10. Prevention of Verbal Reading.

In the Second Teaching experiment we did not discover until

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<sup>1</sup> *Bilingualism*, pages 270, 271. See also page 15 below.

the tenth lesson that the boys were reading purely verbally and were not really understanding what they read.<sup>1</sup> This proved to be largely due to their inability to read their mother-tongue : but the system of English teaching was also at fault.

In the early stages much of the reading is necessarily aloud, and such reading tends to create the bond 'Sight of word—Speech,' with no intervention of idea. It is particularly easy to read in this way in a partially known foreign language.

If, in the early part of the course, sentences are provided with nothing depending on their meaning, there is nothing to prevent the child from treating them as meaningless. Thus the child at an early stage forms the habit of reading without understanding.

One method of preventing this has already been noted, namely intermittent illustration of the meanings of the practice sentences. But this is rather an encouragement to intelligent reading than an actual compulsion. The only way of ensuring that a child shall read with understanding is to require from him some response which he will not be able to make unless he reads and understands.

For this reason the Question Mark is introduced in Lesson 3, and in every subsequent lesson some exercise is provided which demands a response of some kind from the child,—the marking of sentences as true or false, answering Yes or No, selecting the right answer from three alternatives, numbering items in a picture to correspond with its descriptive sentences, silent drill, etc.

These meaningful exercises simultaneously serve another purpose. In the series as a whole we have set at the end of each reading-book which carries the vocabulary forward, a Supplementary Reader which introduces no new words : the purpose of these Supplementary Readers is to exercise the child in the use of the vocabulary thus far attained, and to prove to the child the increase of power and enjoyment which he has achieved. The beginner is less able to make use of his newly attained powers, is more liable to become discouraged than the child who has made some progress. Hence such exercises in use, and such proof of achievement, are needed more frequently in these early stages than they are later.

For this reason each lesson in the first book repeats the plan of the series as a whole : the vocabulary is carried forward a short distance ; the end-exercise of each lesson contains no new words,

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<sup>1</sup> *Bilingualism*, page, 287.



but serves as an application of the words just learned, as a test of ability to read with understanding, and as a proof of increased reading-ability and power of enjoyment of the language.

## 11. Grammar.

This subject has attracted more attention from enquirers interested in the method, (*e.g.* the listeners to wireless lectures on the subject given in Wales) than any other point. The question asked is, How is grammar dealt with in a system in which the child begins to read continuous matter after only a few days' or weeks' acquaintance with the language? and, How would grammar be dealt with in those languages which are more systematic than English?

Let us consider the mental process of a child encountering a new point of grammar, for example the formation of Comparatives. He knows the word Rich; he now meets the peculiar word Richer, a known word, with an unknown appendage. Let us suppose that, instead of meeting the word Richer, he met the phrase 'More rich,' the word More being unfamiliar to him. It is obvious that we should introduce the word More as a new word. We therefore treat the suffix '-er' as a new word. It will not be necessary to point out Poor-er, for both parts of the word are now known to the child; but Big-g-er must be pointed out as a usage, otherwise the child may say "Big I know, but what is Bigg?" In fact regular inflexions on their first occurrence are treated as new words; slightly irregular forms of inflexions already known are treated as usages.

Grammar is thus broken up into its component units. It is taught just as it comes to be needed: it is generalized just in so far as it naturally generalizes itself. It is learned very much as grammar is learned by a child in acquiring his mother-tongue,—as a number of specific word-habits.

It is doubtful whether it would be desirable to apply this unsystematic method to a more systematic language than English. It may effect an economy of time to teach some parts of the French regular verbs systematically at an early point in the course:—such, at least, was my decision in designing the French series of readers. But there can be no justification for introducing a word (*e.g.* Impératrice, 3000th) out of its order in the Word-frequency List merely to illustrate a point of grammar which will not be needed until later. The worst offenders of all in lumber-

ing up a child's vocabulary with words of low frequency are the grammar books :—how many of the words in the Latin Gender Rhymes did we ever use in our Latin proses, or ever meet in our reading ?

## 12. The Difficulty of Reading matter.

The difficulty to the learner of a foreign language in dealing with any passage of reading matter depends upon three factors :—

A. *The 'Density' of New Words* : that is, the number of new words introduced into a given length of text.

B. *The 'Density' of the Questions* : that is, the number of questions to be answered on a given length of text. (The smaller the number of questions the greater the difficulty, because the beginner possesses very little power of 'skimming').

C. *The Size of the 'Unit'* : that is, the length of the section which the pupil is required to peruse before he looks up from the book and gives its substance.

In reference to this last point we have suggested <sup>1</sup> that ideas gathered from reading a foreign language are more 'evanescent' than those gathered in the reading of the mother-tongue : that, although the same number of ideas may be gathered at the moment of reading, in the case of a foreign language a smaller proportion of those ideas is recalled in a review made after a short interval. This supposition has since been confirmed by experiment. <sup>2</sup> It is clear that where the answers to questions are underlined in the process of reading there can be no evanescence, since no factor of memory enters into the process ; but, where the reader is asked to write the answers (already underlined) after the completion of his reading, there is an element of memory, and we shall therefore expect to find some evanescence. The amount of such evanescence may therefore be measured by subtracting the percentage of correct written answers from the percentage of correct underlinings. By doing this, in the one case where the text and questions are in the mother-tongue, and in the other case where the text and questions are in a foreign language, we may observe whether such evanescence is, as we have supposed, greater in the reading of a foreign language. It will be observed from the table given on the next page that Evanescence is about two and a half times greater in the foreign language.

<sup>1</sup> *Bilingualism*, page 305 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Journal of Psychology*, I/4, Oct. 1926.

|                                  |                       | MOTHER<br>TONGUE                  |                          | FOREIGN<br>LANGUAGE               |                          | % DIFFERENCE,<br>UNDERLINING<br>AND ANSWERS. |                      |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--|----------------------|
|                                  | Number<br>of<br>Cases | %<br>correct<br>under-<br>lining. | %<br>correct<br>answers. | %<br>correct<br>under-<br>lining. | %<br>correct<br>answers. | Mother<br>Tongue                             | Foreign<br>Language. |
| B. T. students<br>1924-25 ..     | 29                    | 92.5                              | 92.5                     | 90                                | 83.75                    | 0  | 6.25                 |
| B. T. students<br>1925-26 ..     | 11                    | 97.5                              | 90                       | 96.25                             | 83.75                    | 7.5  | 12.5                 |
| Dacca Inter. 1st<br>Year 1925-26 | 19                    | 92.5                              | 87.5                     | 90                                | 87.5                     | 5  | 2.5                  |
| Matric. (Class X ..              | 25                    | 90                                | 81.25                    | 85                                | 61.25                    | 8.75   | 23.75                |
| Class IX (A good<br>school) ..   | 41                    | 90                                | 88.75                    | 81.25                             | 72.5                     | 1.25   | 8.75                 |
| Class IX (An<br>average school)  | 15                    | 90                                | 82.5                     | 66.25                             | 56.25                    | 7.5  | 10                   |
| TOTAL ..                         | 140<br>MEAN.          | 91.45                             | 87.45                    | 84.49                             | 74.0                     | 4.0  | 10.49                |

#### A. *The Treatment of New Word density.*

The maximum density compatible with ease and enjoyment was originally fixed at 1 new in 50 running words.<sup>1</sup> But in addition to new words there are new usages which also act as slight obstacles to ease and enjoyment. To allow for these individually would be very complicated, especially as they vary greatly in difficulty. Hence they are allowed for in mass by lowering the new word density to 1-60.

We have argued above in reference to Book 1A that the beginner needs at frequent intervals some materials which merely exercise him in the vocabulary already gained and encourage in him a sense of progress and achievement. This need is still felt, though in a less measure, in Reader 1B, and is met, in the early part of that book, by 'bunching' the new words, so that, though one section is a toilsome piece of reading, the next affords a clear run. In the second part of the book the 'clear runs' are made less frequent but rather longer,—since the child can now read faster. The centre story is practically free of new words, as a half-way rest-house.

When Reader II is reached the child should possess some power of rapid reading; hence the incidence of new words is here made as regular as possible throughout.

<sup>1</sup> *Bilingualism*, pages 270-271.

### B. *The Treatment of Question-density.*

The highest question-density is reached where there is a question only and no text. In the picture-exercises provided in the earliest lessons this condition is achieved. Later, as a transition, a picture and a question are given, with three alternative answers, the task being to mark the correct answer; the two rejected answers provide that situation of having to pass over certain words and *pick out* the required idea, which constitutes the essence of true reading. In the next type of lesson there is a picture, with sentences describing it, each sentence being preceded by a question. The task is to underline in the sentence the word or words which answer the question. This procedure, underlining the answer in the text, is precisely that employed in all the subsequent reading-books, and is used also in the stories at the end of Book IA. But in Book IA the task is made easier in two ways:—first, the question-density is extremely high, ranging from 1-6 in the descriptions to 1-24 in the stories; and secondly the questions are interspersed with the text, each individual question being followed by that portion of the text which gives its answer. In Reader IB and the subsequent books several questions are set upon the one section; for this reason the question-density at the beginning of Book IB is made higher than it is at the end of Book IA. The density is gradually decreased through Book IB; and in Book II no further account is taken of the matter. —The very low densities used in training for high speed reading<sup>1</sup> are a matter for a very much later stage of the course, and could of course only be used in ‘supplementary’ material, viz., matter containing no new words.

### C. *The Treatment of Evanescence.*

The beginner learns to overcome the disability of Evanescence by reading and reviewing units of gradually increasing length.

The units of the stories in Book IA average 75 words each. In Reader IB the units gradually increase in length. This increase can, of course, only be carried to a certain point (about 360 words) in the reading-books, though in the supplementary material there is no such limit. The reason for this restriction is that the child has to learn all the words of a section before commencing to read the section: it is comparatively easy to obtain a temporary memory of six to eight words, which will be finally impressed on the mind by meeting them each three or four times<sup>2</sup> in the reading of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Bilingualism*, Chapter 7.

<sup>2</sup> *Learning to read a Foreign Language*, page 28.

section. But, since there is one new word for every sixty running words, in a unit of 600-700 running words there would be ten or twelve new words to learn ; this would involve considerable effort on the part of the child and would cause a long break in the continuity of the reading. For this reason, in and after Book 2 a unit is generally made that portion of reading matter which contains about six new words.

### 13. The Selection of Material.

The most important factor in determining a child's pleasure (or otherwise) in his reading book, is the selection of material.

We have before us seven lists of stories selected as favourites by various groups of English and American children (numbering in all several thousands). A series of three reading-books intended for English children contains not a single story mentioned in any of those lists. A series of four English readers intended for Indians contains one only. Nor does the type of stories used in these books approximate in any way to the type of story preferred by the child at the age for which the book is intended.

The selection of stories for reading-books in a foreign language presents two special problems :—

#### (i) *The Age Discrepancy.*

When, in the early stages, the vocabulary is very small, it is difficult to find stories mentally ' old ' enough for the children which can be told within the vocabulary available.<sup>1</sup> In actual practice this difficulty is not very serious if the child begins the study of his second language at a fairly early age. Thus if the child starts his foreign language at the age of 8, he attains a reading vocabulary of about 760 words by the age of 9½-10 and with these words, selected according to their frequency, it is possible to tell the stories ordinarily chosen as favourites by children aged 9-10.<sup>2</sup>

#### (ii) *The Choice of Local Colour.*

In teaching English to an Indian child, we may either tell English stories in an English setting, or we may tell Indian stories in an Indian setting. The choice of the first alternative produces stories so unfamiliar in the details of their social environment as to be unintelligible (*e.g.* Peter Pan). The choice of the second alternative provides stories which the child would understand and appreciate in his vernacular, but the stories are spoiled for him by being translated into a foreign medium which destroys their flavour ; or, if the

<sup>1</sup> *Bilingualism* 238-240, 262-263. <sup>2</sup> See page 20 below and *New Method Reader II*.

English medium be adapted to convey the local colour, the purity of the child's English is contaminated by the introduction of a number of 'half-caste' words. The idea of those who insist on the use of "Indian stories" in English reading-books for Indian children is doubtless that such hybrid material is more intelligible to, and more popular with, the children. Our experience is otherwise.<sup>1</sup> There is however a means of avoiding this dilemma.

There are certain great stories of the world, the favourites of children in many languages: such stories have a colour of their own, and can survive in any setting. They are independent of the local differences of men, because they embody some great common factor of mankind. Such are the stories which we must use. But in selecting them we cannot trust our own judgment, for our present tastes are the tastes of the adult, and our memories of our own preferences in childhood are not necessarily representative of the majority, nor of the present day.

*The Child's taste in reading.*<sup>2</sup>

It is of course useless to attempt any investigation of the pre-

<sup>1</sup> *Learning to read a Foreign Language*, page 53.

<sup>2</sup> The three chief books on the objective study of children's taste in reading are:—

(1) Uhl, W. L., *The Materials of Reading*, 1924. This attempts to determine what qualities in a story (Humour, Style, etc.) chiefly appeal. The author also shows what percentages of children and teachers selected certain favourite stories in certain grades. He supplies an excellent list of "Superior Selections" viz: stories most frequently mentioned by children and teachers in each grade.

(2) Terman, L. M. and Lima, M., 1924. *Children's Reading*. The results are derived from the answers to a questionnaire issued to parents for examination of their children and to University students (for personal memories). It contains an excellent discussion of the types of literature preferred at given ages, and a descriptive list of books suitable for children of various ages.

(3) Jordan, A. M., *Children's Interests in Reading*, 1926, (An excellent book, originally published in 1921, now revised).

ALSO:—

Anderson, R. E., *Reading tastes of High school pupils*. Pedagogic Seminary, XIX, 438-460.

Dunn, F. W., *Interest Factors in Primary Reading material*, Columbia, 1921.

Leonard, S. A., *Essential Principles of teaching Reading and Literature*, 1922, Ch. III.

McConn, C. M., *High school students' ratings of English Classics*, English Journal, 257-272, 1912.

Olcott, F. J., *Children's Reading*, 1912, 19-28.

Willett, G. W., *The Reading Interest of High school pupils*, English Journal, 1919, 474-487.

Hall, G. S. and Smith, T. L., *Aspects of Child Life and Education*, 1912, page 53, 'Psychology of Day Dreams,' and page 81, "Curiosity and Interest."

Kimmins, C. W., *Children's Dreams*, 1920.

ferences of Indian children at the ages with which we are concerned, because they can read almost nothing in English except their textbooks, and they read very little in their mother-tongue. We must therefore take the preferences of English or American children as our guide, making such allowances as are obviously necessary.

The easiest error to make, and the most fatal is, not to select an unpopular story, but to select a popular story and put it at the wrong age. A good story which is too old or too young for the class is probably even less enjoyable than a rightly placed tale of second-rate merit:—moreover it is a good story spoiled, for it might have been used successfully elsewhere. The greatest need of the textbook writer is of some guidance as to the ages at which certain types of story either become, or cease to be, popular.

This point is well discussed in Terman & Lima, (see the Bibliography above) and their objective evidence as regards American children is adequate; but we thought it desirable, since the point is of such importance, to verify their conclusions by an examination of some English schools. Three schools were examined, a good Elementary school, a large Central school, and a first grade Preparatory school. The boys were asked to write their three favourite stories and their age on a slip of paper.

Girls were not included because we are not primarily concerned with girls, and because girls read boys' books far more than boys read girls' books.<sup>1</sup>

The results of this enquiry, supplemented by Terman & Lima, are shown below:—

- Age 8. Fairy tales are a safe choice at this age; also stories of 'Children in other Lands.'
- Age 9. Fairy tales of a more complex type may be used; but the interest in fairy tales is now fading. Stories of the child's own environment, e.g., *A Visit to the Fair*, and tales of Boy Scouts are more popular.
- Age 10. Fairy tales are now definitely out of favour. Stories of adventure and travel are preferred. There is some interest in mechanical inventions.
- Age 11. Henty's books and books of the same type are now popular; also animal stories.
- Age 12. School stories are first commonly mentioned at this age (though Terman puts them at age 11). Biographies are popular. Detective and mystery stories are much favoured.

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<sup>1</sup> Terman & Lima, *op. cit.*, page 72.

**Age 13.** Much the same as ages 11 and 12. Adventure stories are of the more complex type, *e.g.* *King Solomon's Mines*. Matter about hobbies and "The Successful Inventor" plot are popular.

**Age 14.** Jungle stories, and The Wilds may safely be placed here. The taste of the children is very varied now, and all the ordinary "Books for Boys" are mentioned.

This statement is at the best only approximate : individual differences are of course very great, but the above is a useful guide especially at the point where one is most apt to err, namely ages 9-10.

*The most popular stories.*

In some cases one desires to know the most popular stories of a certain type, *e.g.* Fairy tales. This information was needed in order to design Reader IB, and was obtained by the help of *John o' London's Weekly*, whose readers co-operated with me by supplying a number of lists of fairy tales, their own favourites in childhood, or the favourites among the classes of children whom they were teaching. The six most popular appear to be—1. Cinderella, 2. The Three Bears, 3. Jack and the Beanstalk, 4. The Sleeping Beauty, 5. Beauty and the Beast, 6. Snowdrop. The book was designed accordingly.

In addition to such definite guidance in regard to a certain type of story, it is useful to know generally which are the most popular stories of any type among children of a certain age. In this work we had some good fortune, since at the time these investigations were being undertaken, the returns of the Helsingfors Questionnaire were being collected by the Y. M. C. A. This questionnaire includes two enquiries, as to the books preferred before the age of 14, and as to those preferred between ages 14 and 18. By courtesy of Mr. Walter Ashley, the present writer was enabled personally to tabulate all the returns then available at the London headquarters.

The complete lists are too large for reproduction here, but lists of the twelve most popular books ( or types of book ) in each group may be of interest.

The twelve most popular books ( or types of book ) before 14 were :—1. The Bible : 2, 3. Sexton Blake, School stories : 4. History : 5. Dickens : 6. Henty : 7. Tom Brown : 8-12. The Scout, Treasure Island, Shakespeare, Nature stories, Buffalo Bill.

From age 14 to age 18, the twelve most popular books ( or types of book ) were :—

1. Detective stories.
2. Treasure Island.



- 3, 4. Coral Island, Sherlock Holmes.
- 5, 6. Jules Verne, Tom Brown.
- 7, 8, 9. The Bible, Oliver Twist, The Three Musketeers.
- 10. Robinson Crusoe.
- 11. Baroness Orczy.
- 12. Ivanhoe.

The 'scatter' of the voting is in both cases very wide, and the number of votes obtained by any of the above is small compared with the total poll. The results were difficult to classify because the questionnaire did not indicate whether book, author, or type was to be given.

*Material other than stories.*

ARTICLES. Considerable difficulty was experienced in the construction of the original series from the fact that the informative articles tended to introduce into the vocabulary semi-technical words of little general utility. For this reason in the new series no articles of this kind are used in the second book (IB). In the third book (Reader II) articles on hygiene are given, and it is found here that by the use of liberal illustration of the more difficult points, such semitechnical words can, in a large measure (though not entirely), be avoided.

PLAYS. These are introduced in Reader III onwards. The main reason for using them is that they afford an opportunity for introducing contractions ("I'll," "won't," etc.) and colloquialisms which cannot readily be introduced into ordinary narrative.

POETRY. Poetry is first introduced in the third book (Reader II). Poetry presents great difficulty in the matter of local colour. Most of the simple poems, especially those of childhood, are deeply saturated with the local colour of England and English domestic life. For this reason the poems of A. A. Milne could not be used, nor those of R. L. Stevenson (which are also rather complex in their vocabulary). In respect of vocabulary the simplest writer appears to be Miss Rose Fyleman, and her poems, being more imaginative in type, are less localized than others. Kate Greenaway, using a characteristic setting of her own, does not introduce much local colour, and hence is very readily adaptable for the reading of non-English children.

The difficulty of poetry lies in the fact that its expression is fixed. In prose the passage can be so adapted that it may not introduce more new words than the required quantum, and so that each new word may be introduced sufficiently often to familiarize

the reader with it. In order to overcome the first difficulty (of an excess of new words), each poem is preceded by some story or article so selected that some of the new words of the succeeding poem may be introduced into it. Thus 'Oberon and Titania' prepares the way for 'If you meet a fairy,' and 'Napoleon' makes ready the way for 'Look over the wall.'

The second point (adequate practice of new words in a poem) is dealt with by prefixing to the poem some practice sentences to prepare the new words. Moreover, since, in the first few instances, the child will inevitably have difficulty with the new experience of verse and rhythm, a prose paraphrase is also supplied. Thus, by the time the child reaches the poem, he knows all the words, has an idea of the substance, and is free to give his whole attention to appreciation of the diction and rhythm of the poem itself. In the case of 'Hassan,' a dramatic poem, all the new words are introduced in the stage directions, leaving the verse clear.

**REVISION EXERCISES.** In Books IA and IB these exercises aim primarily at giving practice in facility. But in Book II and the subsequent books it is assumed that the child has now acquired some degree of facility, and the main aim here is revision of the vocabulary. For this reason such exercises are used in these later books as will introduce the largest number of different words in the smallest space, *e.g.* Completion of a story by filling in blanks, acrostics, cross-word puzzles, and such like.

**SUPPLEMENTARY READERS.**—Supplementary Reader 1 aims at accustoming the child to reading stories of increasing length and to 'units' of increasing size. It begins with fables, goes on with short animal stories, and ends with longer and more complex fairy tales. It aims also at supplying practice in the extraction of the substance of a passage without the help of questions given before-hand.

The other supplementary readers assume these powers of reading and aim primarily at displaying to the child his increase in reading ability at each point, and at giving a taste of the literature to which it gives access. Thus Reader 2 supplies two of the very beautiful stories of Mary de Morgan. Ruskin's *King of the Golden River* may also later be added at this point: the vocabulary is capable of it, but the story is most popular with children aged twelve, whereas at this stage the children are 10 to 11 years old. Supplementary Reader 3 (vocabulary 1072) tells *Robinson Crusoe* very largely in the wording of the original.

In Supplementary Readers of this latter type a few new words

are introduced. These are words which could have been avoided, but their avoidance would have involved considerable changes, and have rather marred the original. Such new words are not entered in the general vocabulary of words known, for the reason, of course, that not all children will read the supplementary books.

#### **14. The Technique of Construction.**

We shall now describe in general the methods of construction which we have used in producing books of this kind ( viz : books written to introduce in order a limited vocabulary of high frequency words) because we believe that some of the devices which have been evolved under the stress of necessity may help to save the time and labour of others engaged upon a similar task.

Reader IA presents a special problem : it is very different from all the other books. It is the most difficult and discouraging of all the books to write, because, with the utmost labour in the world, it can never be more than an imperfect attempt to comply with impossible conditions. One device may however be useful to other constructors, namely that for discovering what words can be framed with the limited number of letters available at any given stage. In the earliest lessons it is, of course, possible to work out all the permutations and combinations of the letters available ; but this soon becomes impracticable. The device then used was to work out all the possible beginnings and ends of words, to look up the former in an ordinary dictionary, and the latter in a rhyming dictionary, and to select all the words which included no outside letters. The 'credit indices' of the words thus selected were then ascertained and, apart from the requirements of the subject matter, the most common were selected.

We will now describe the method of constructing stories in Reader IB and the later readers.

##### **(i) *Check for unavoidable words.***

The story must first be told through mentally in order to observe what words of low frequency are likely to be inextricably involved in the plot. If there are too many the story must be rejected. We must also note whether the story seems helpful in bringing in the words wanted, viz : those included in the section of the Frequency Vocabulary on which we are working.

##### **(ii) *Drafting the story.***

The first draft is now begun. The vocabulary of the whole series of books up to the present is at hand, and is referred to after

every third or fourth word to check whether some word has been used already or in what precise sense it has been used. If there is any doubt at all the word must be looked up, for it is much easier to avoid errors now than to detect them later. The Frequency Vocabulary is also at hand : from this suitable new words are selected for introduction into the text at approximately sixty-word intervals. Each word on its first introduction is brought in three times, but it must also be introduced again later in the story if possible. For this reason each such word, besides being underlined and noted in the margin, is entered on a list of all the new words introduced into the story thus far.

(iii) *Checking Density.*

At the completion of each page of the manuscript the words on the page are counted, as well as the new words ; the new words are multiplied by sixty and the number of running words is subtracted from the product (or vice versa). The result is noted as plus or minus. Any deficiency of running words must be made up on the next page before any further new words are introduced, or, in case of a large discrepancy, the page just completed must be re-written omitting certain new words or adjusting the running words.

(iv) *The Second Version.*

The finished draft is read over and corrected to smooth out any awkwardness of expression due to the exigencies of introducing new words or avoiding low-frequency words.

All the 'usages' are next inspected to see whether any words have been so noted which should more properly have been classified as 'new words.'

The words are then counted to determine the 'density' of new words (which has been disturbed in the process of correction above). A fair copy is then made, and during the process any fault of density, viz., excess or deficiency of running words or unintentional bunching of new words, is corrected.

The fair copy is then checked against the original manuscript to make sure that, in copying, no new words have been left unmarked.

(v) *Preparing the Companion.*

The questions are then set, so as to cover all the leading points of the story. It is important that these questions should demand short answers and that their answers should be clearly given by the story. Hence the manuscript is adjusted to fit the questions ; viz., the text is modified so that to each question a clear, definite and short answer is to be found in the reading-book.

At the time of setting the questions the sections are marked off. In the case of Reader II or III a convenient place for ending a section is looked for after every sixth new word.

The second version is now counted to discover the final exact density of new words for entry in the Classified List (see below). (This could not be done before because the length of the story is altered in the process of adjusting it to the questions).

The new words in each section are now entered at the head of the questions on that section.

The story and its portion of the ' Companion ' are now complete.

(vi) *Entering up.*

The new words are first entered on the Classified List, viz. under Parts of Speech. This list is used in emergency when a word is needed but no suitable word appears to be available ; we may then with the help of this list, look through the complete stock of adjectives (or nouns, etc.) and discover that which best meets the case. The list is also used in writing Revision Exercises and the Supplementary Reader. The number of new words, and of running words, and the ' density ' are also entered here.

The new words are next entered in the alphabetical list of all the words introduced into the series thus far, each word being followed by the number of the lesson, and a note as to the exact sense in which it has been used. (Certain rules are framed to make these entries consistent).

The new words are then struck off the Word-frequency List (viz., the Thorndike " Teacher's Word Book.")

(vii) *Revision.*

The whole manuscript is then read through, looking up almost every word, in order to detect any errors (viz. outside words which ought not to have been used).

(viii) *The Final Check.*

On the completion of a book the following checks are necessary :—

1. A general revision. (During this revision the punctuation is given special attention ; the books are all rather over-punctuated—especially Books II and III—as this helps the children with the syntax of the longer sentences).
2. A check of the typescript with the alphabetical vocabulary to detect ' outside ' words,

3. A check of new words in the Companion against those in the typescript.
4. A check of the questions in the Companion against the text of the typescript.
5. A check of the 'List of new words section by section' against those words entered above the questions.

(ix) *Completion of the Manuscript and Companion.*

The pronunciation signs are now entered in the 'Vocabulary section by section.'

The running total ("You now know . . . words") is now entered at the end of each lesson in the reading-book.

Lastly, the manuscript is marked to show what illustrations are required.

## 15. The Teaching of Speech and Writing.

In the learning of a foreign language, reading to a great extent takes the place of that important preliminary stage of passive listening and understanding whereby the child prepares himself for the speaking of his mother-tongue. In no language do we ever gather a number of entirely unfamiliar words and venture forth immediately upon the hazardous experiment of using them in our speech. On the contrary, when, under the natural conditions of learning a language, not in the class-room, but in a foreign country, we venture upon a new word in our speech, it is always one which we have heard or read so often that its meaning, usage, and grammatical properties have already become subconsciously familiar to us; we thus use it with confidence and without fear of ridicule.

We believe that it is the insufficient emphasis on this passive preparatory phase of learning which is very largely responsible for the inaccuracy of the results of English-teaching in India. We have been given to understand that the most useful contribution of this present work to the teaching of foreign languages in England is its re-emphasis on the importance of the passive stage of language-learning as a preparation for active use, and that the chief value of the type of reading matter which we have constructed is that it will make this order of procedure possible in the school.

The reader will naturally enquire at this point, in what way this priority of passive work can be reconciled with an existing syllabus aiming at speaking and writing, and in what way the reading material described above can be made use of in a class which is learning to speak and to write as well as to read.

The syllabus given below<sup>1</sup> is an embodiment of all the principles which we have set forth. It probably comes far nearer to what the schools are actually doing than the present syllabus. Thus the changes required in any syllabus, or in the practice of the schools, to fit it to the method which we advocate, are not great, although they are very significant.

The essential change required is the separation of the Reading course from that in Writing and Speaking.

We have suggested in the syllabus that the English work be divided into two parts, (A) Reading and Listening, and (B) Speaking and Writing, and that the time available should be so allocated between these two parts that the child's progress in reading should always be well ahead, both in the textbook and in his vocabulary, of his speech.

The syllabus quoted below gives a partial answer to the second question above, namely how the reading-books are to be employed in a class where speech and writing are being taught as well as reading. It will be observed that the course in speech and writing is very largely based upon the reading-books. We shall very rightly be asked why this is done, since these books were primarily designed for the teaching of reading.

Since speech and writing must follow after reading, ideally what we should do is to construct a series of books for teaching speech and writing which will bring in again, in situations of conversation or writing, the words previously taught in the reading course,—those words which are of value only for reading being, of course, omitted.

We have not, as yet, provided such books for the teaching of speech and writing; but we hope to do so eventually. For the present the intelligent teacher will be able to do a great deal of the construction of these lessons for himself. Suppose, however, that the unintelligent teacher bases his course in the active use of the language directly on these reading-books without any discrimination as to what words are most useful for speech, what will be the amount of waste? In other words, what percentage of the words which he teaches will be outside that section of the frequency-vocabulary which his course in speaking and writing should be building up?

At the conclusion of Book III the total vocabulary is 1072 words. These are taken from the frequency vocabulary as follows.—

| First 500 words. | 2nd 500 words. | 3rd 500 words. | 4th 500 words. | Other words. |
|------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 500              | 430            | 82             | 8              | 52           |

<sup>1</sup> Pages 29-32 below.

We may perhaps accept words which fall within the first 2000 as legitimate. Of the 52 remaining words 11 are simple derivatives or compounds of more common words which have been already taught (*e.g.* Watchman): these are classified as separate words by Thorndike, but actually they involve practically no extra effort of learning.

Of the remaining 41 words 10 are names of countries or large towns; these, being merely transliterated from one language to another, do not require the same effort to learn them as do common nouns, and have therefore been treated as usages in the reading-books.

The remaining 31 words are shown below, and the reader may judge for himself to what extent the embodiment of these words in the active vocabulary of the child at this stage causes a waste of time. Some of the words, Duckling, Wizard, Microscope, are of little use outside the reading-vocabulary; others (*e.g.* Cart, Loaf, Lane) are more doubtful.

The introduction of the word was due to—

| THE PLOTS OF<br>STORIES. |         | POEMS.     |         | ARTICLES.  |         | THE<br>ALPHABET |         |
|--------------------------|---------|------------|---------|------------|---------|-----------------|---------|
| Cage                     | .. 3500 | Curious    | .. 3500 | Cape       | .. 3000 | Ass             | .. 3500 |
| Cart                     | .. 3000 | Dim        | .. 3000 | Careless   | .. 3500 | Lane            | .. 3000 |
| (Duck)-ling              | 0       | Gigantic   | .. 6900 | Microscope | .. 0    |                 |         |
| Elder                    | .. 3500 | Glimmer    | .. 5300 | Stomach    | .. 4000 |                 |         |
| Elephant                 | .. 3500 | Jolly      | .. 4000 |            |         |                 |         |
| Jar                      | .. 3000 | Nursery    | .. 5300 |            |         |                 |         |
| Jewel                    | .. 3000 | Pilgrim    | .. 4000 |            |         |                 |         |
| Loaf                     | .. 4500 | Pilgrimage | 5800    |            |         |                 |         |
| Magpie                   | .. 6900 | Solemn     | .. 3000 |            |         |                 |         |
| Powder                   | .. 3000 |            |         |            |         |                 |         |
| Prick                    | .. 3500 |            |         |            |         |                 |         |
| Princess                 | .. 3000 |            |         |            |         |                 |         |
| Swan                     | .. 3500 |            |         |            |         |                 |         |
| Thief                    | .. 3000 |            |         |            |         |                 |         |
| Wax                      | .. 3000 |            |         |            |         |                 |         |
| Wizard                   | .. 5000 |            |         |            |         |                 |         |

Thus the waste due to basing speech and writing direct on the reading-books for the present, instead of on such a series of books as we hope eventually to design amounts to something less than 8% of the total vocabulary.

Where the standard of efficiency has been set so high, a loss of this magnitude is not to be despised; but for the present the completion of the reading series is obviously a more urgent matter than the provision of the other books.



## 16. English Syllabus for Secondary Schools.

The general principles governing the construction of this syllabus are :—

1. That it is important that the child should be enabled to read English with ease and enjoyment at as early a period of his school career as possible.
2. That the child's progress in reading should always be somewhat ahead of his progress in speaking and writing, in order that he may become accustomed to the meaning and correct use of new words and phrases in his reading, before he makes use of them in speaking and writing.
3. That progress in reading tends to be more rapid than progress in speaking and writing. (The course in reading is therefore kept separate from the course in speaking and writing, so that the child may not be retarded in the former, nor hurried in the latter).

### *Allocation of periods.*

The periods available for English should be so allocated between the course in reading and the course in speech and writing that the progress of the children in reading should always be in advance of their progress in speech and writing.

### *Grammar.*

The Grammar Syllabus is the same as usual. (Teachers are recommended not to devote more time to grammar than is justified by the resulting gain in accuracy of speech and writing).

## FIRST YEAR.\*

### FIRST HALF-YEAR.

*Reading*—Recognising letters ; reading words and sentences formed with those letters. Reading questions in English and answering them in the vernacular ; reading simple directions and fulfilling them. (The questions and directions should sometimes be read aloud to the class for practice in hearing and understanding).

*Speech*—Reading aloud, with great attention to pronunciation.

*Writing*—Transcription from the reader ; later, dictation of passages which have been previously read and transcribed.

### SECOND HALF-YEAR.

*Reading*—Reading simple descriptions and stories, and answering (in the vernacular) questions in English on them.

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\* First year of English-study, namely in Bengal, age about 8-9.

**Speech**—Oral drill (vernacular to English) on new words, idioms and sentence-forms encountered in the reader. Oral retranslation (viz : translation back into English of sentences translated from the reader into the vernacular). Answering very easy questions in English on pictures in the reader and, later, on stories in the reader. Reading aloud for pronunciation.

**Writing**—Transcription from the reader. Dictation (after careful preparation to ensure accuracy).

## SECOND YEAR.

**Reading**—Reading and answering (in the vernacular) questions on the matter read. Listening to reading, and answering (in the vernacular) questions on the matter heard.

(The reader should consist mainly of stories, but informative articles and some very simple poetry may be introduced. One or more supplementary readers should be provided.)

**Speech**—Oral drill on new words, idioms and sentence-forms in the reader. Oral retranslation based on the reader. Answering questions (in English) on passages in the reader. Reading aloud, and recitation from memory of passages (both poetry and prose) from the reader, great attention being paid to correct pronunciation.

**Writing**—The children should learn to write what they have previously learned to say correctly, viz. answers to questions, and retranslation of sentences. Transcription. Dictation (after careful preparation). Portions of passages, learned for recitation, may be written out from memory.

## THIRD YEAR.

**Reading**—Reading, and answering (in the vernacular) questions on the matter read. Listening to reading, and answering questions on the matter heard. (The reader should contain stories, informative articles and simple poetry. Some prose written in the dramatic form may be included. One or more supplementary readers should be provided). Writing in the vernacular the substance of passages from the supplementary reader.

**Speech**—Oral drill on new words, idioms and sentence-forms encountered in the reader. Oral retranslation. Answering questions (in English) on passages in the reader. Reproduction in English of short stories, or incidents from stories, in the reader. Reading aloud and recitation of poetry and prose. The children should learn the ordinary class directions and conversation e.g. "Clean the board," "Open your books," etc., in English. Material written in the dramatic form may be acted or recited.

**Writing**—Writing answers in English to questions on the reader, writing retranslations previously prepared orally. Reproduction in English of short stories, or incidents from stories, in the reader, previously reproduced orally, then written, corrected, and rewritten in the correct form : ( the aim should be accuracy rather than quantity ). Writing out from memory material, poetry and prose, learned for recitation. Dictation (after careful preparation).

#### FOURTH YEAR.

**Reading**—Reading and answering ( in the vernacular ) questions on the matter read. Listening to reading and answering questions on the matter heard.

(The reader should consist of stories, articles, poetry, and some prose written in the dramatic form. One or more supplementary readers should be provided ).

Précis-writing in the vernacular (from the supplementary reader ).

**Speech**—Oral drill on new words, idioms and sentence-forms encountered in the readers. Answering questions on passages from the reader. Giving the substance of passages in the reader. Reproduction of stories, or longer incidents from stories, in the reader. Reading aloud and recitation. Short conversations on subjects within the vocabulary of the class.

**Writing**—Writing in English the substance of stories or articles in the reader. Reproduction in English of longer stories or incidents from stories in the reader previously reproduced orally, then written, corrected, and rewritten in the correct form. Writing out retranslation prepared orally. Letter-writing ( to parents and friends ) should be begun.

#### FIFTH YEAR.

**Reading**—Reading and answering ( in the vernacular ) questions on the matter read. Listening and answering questions on the matter heard. (Ample supplementary readers should be provided and some attention should be paid to facility). Précis-writing in the vernacular (from the supplementary reader).

**Speech**—Oral drill on new words, etc. Giving the substance of passages in the reader. Recitation. Longer conversations on easy subjects.

The children may prepare and deliver to the class short lectures on simple subjects suggested to them or selected by themselves.

**Writing**—Writing out the substance of stories and articles in

the reader. Written retranslations. Short essays descriptive of familiar objects or incidents, first prepared orally, then written, corrected, and rewritten in the correct form. Writing the substance of short lectures to be delivered by the child himself, and of those delivered by other children. Writing letters and replies.

### SIXTH YEAR.

*Reading* -Reading, and answering questions on the matter read. Listening, and answering questions on the matter heard. (Ample supplementary readers should be provided, and the pupils should sometimes be required to read and obtain the substance of a fairly long passage within a limited time. The use of books of reference should be taught).

*Speech* -Oral drill on new words, etc. Giving the substance of articles and stories in the reader. Recitation. Conversation. "Little lectures" as in the fifth year.

*Writing* -Writing the substance of passages in the reader. Retranslation. Descriptive essays written as in the fifth year; also easy narrative essays, both first prepared orally, written, corrected and rewritten. Writing the substance of 'little lectures.' Précis-writing in English from the supplementary reader. Letter-writing, including simple business letters, applications for employment, etc.; the correct form of address and conclusion should be carefully taught.

### SEVENTH AND EIGHTH YEARS.

Headmasters will frame their own course guided by the syllabus for the Matriculation or School Final Examination.

Silent reading should be encouraged both in and out of class.

Practice in conversation should be continued. English debates on simple subjects. Oral composition should be done as a preparation for written composition.

Essays. Précis-writing in English. Translation. Letter-writing. In written work the pupils should be taught to aim at writing a little correctly rather than a great deal incorrectly. Every mistake should be carefully noted by the individual pupil in order that it may never be repeated. Every pupil should possess a dictionary, and should be allowed to use it at all times. (There should therefore be no excuse for spelling errors). The teacher's aim should be to prevent errors, and pupils should be encouraged to ask, whenever they are in doubt as to the correctness of an expression, before committing it to writing.





